

CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

'THE WORLD WE LIVE IN': THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE WORLD WILDLIFE FUND, HELD IN THE BEETHOVENHALLE, BONN, WEST GERMANY, 5 OCTOBER 1973

Over 500 people from 35 countries, gathered in Bonn at the Third International Congress of the World Wildlife Fund on 5 October 1973, called for Governments to stabilize and ultimately reduce human populations as the principal means of conserving natural resources and achieving the highest quality of life for all mankind.

The Congress identified the human population explosion as the prime cause of the environmental crisis, resulting in sharp rises in consumption of natural resources of all kinds, and in looming crises for energy and materials. Calling on decision-makers to recognize the limited resources of Earth, the Congress said Governments should consider policies to stabilize and ultimately reduce populations according to the carrying capacity of the land and oceans.

The Congress, which was inaugurated by Mr H. D. Genscher, Minister of Home Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, and President of the World Wildlife Fund/Germany, included a series of wide-ranging addresses by distinguished international experts on environmental and conservation affairs. Professor Paul Ehrlich (USA) vividly posed the threat of the population explosion, while Dr Jacques Piccard (Switzerland) presented the problems of pollution of air, water, and soil. Dr Aurelio Peccei (Italy) reviewed the future of mankind.

Conservation of Nature in the third world was the major topic dealt with by Dr Bernhard Grzimek (Germany), who considered Africa and its great heritage of wild animals; by H. R. H. Prince Gyanendra of Nepal, who described his country's conservation programme and announced the establishment of the Mount Everest National Park; and by Ambassador Keith Johnson of Jamaica, who dealt with environmental problems.

Mrs Annemarie Renger, President of the Bundestag, addressed the Congress on environmental conservation in Germany, while Dr J. Speer, President of the German Research Society, dealt with the application of research to environmental problems.

Speaking on behalf of the United Nations' newly-established Environment Programme, its Executive Director, Mr Maurice Strong, who is also a Trustee of the World Wildlife Fund, stressed the interdependence of Man with the physical systems of the biosphere and of Man with Man in exploiting and caring for these natural systems.

The Congress was summed up by H. R. H. The Prince of the Netherlands, President of the World Wildlife Fund, with the words: 'We are aware of the rapid changes that are taking place in our world today. We are conscious of the legitimate aspirations of the poor countries and the need to provide them with a fair share of the world's resources. We are firmly resolved to do everything in our power to maintain those values, including the continued existence of wild things and wild places, that make this planet a world worth living in. It is our heritage, and I ask you all to pledge yourselves to safeguard The World We Live In.'

The 22 resolutions of the Congress, which were passed by acclamation, were mostly calls to Governments and decision-makers to act now to save the natural environment through implementation of international conventions and protection of threatened natural areas, animals, and plants. India, Kenya, and Nepal, were singled out for congratulations on their conservation efforts, and the Congress applauded the launching of cooperation between the World Wildlife Fund and the World Scout movement.

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INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON AMAZONIAN WILDLIFE AND FRESHWATER FISHERIES, HELD AT MANAUS, BRAZIL, 25 NOVEMBER TO 1 DECEMBER 1973

This symposium was appropriately held in the heart of the Amazon region, at Manaus. It was organized by the Programme on the Tropics of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IICA-Trópicos), with the cooperation of the Brazilian Institute for Forest Development (IBDE, the governmental agency for forestry, wildlife, and national parks) and the Brazilian Agency for Fishing in the Amazon (SUDEPE).

The state of knowledge of wildlife and fisheries in the Amazonian area was reviewed in over 40 papers, and the proceedings will be published by IICA-Trópicos. Participants, totalling 105, included both scientists and administrators. Heads and specialists from official wildlife and freshwater fisheries departments in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, dealing with Amazonian problems, and scientists from research institutes and universities, took part in the meeting. In addition, FAO and IUCN were represented.

The 15 recommendations included proposals concerning:

- Signing and ratification of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.
- Control of illegal traffic in endangered species using rivers and other channels of commerce.
- Cooperation in cataloguing Amazonian species that are now being harvested, and in assessing their population status.
- Preparation of lists of endangered species in the Amazon region, using the IUCN Red Data Book classification.
- Establishment of systems of national parks and reserves in all Amazonian countries—for the conservation of adequate representative samples of Amazonia to meet the needs of education, research, gene-pools, and, where possible, tourism.

- Planning and establishing national parks in frontier areas.
- Setting aside substantial natural areas in all colonization or agrarian reform programmes, to act as reserves for wildlife and as possible breeding centres.
- Prohibition of the introduction of exotic species without prior exhaustive research.
- Measures for restricting the spread of alien species already introduced.
- Prohibition against declaring any wild animal a 'pest' without prior exhaustive research; control of 'pest' species to be carried out only by accredited government agencies.
- Strict control of biocides and pollutants, and carrying out of impact studies before biocides are used. The symposium proposed a complete ban on the use of 'Agent Orange,' which has been extensively employed in Vietnam to destroy forests and which has been the subject of trials in the Amazon region.
- Convening of a meeting of representatives of Amazonian countries and international organizations concerned, to arrange for the most effective coordination of conservation and management of Amazonian wildlife and fisheries. The setting up of breeding centres by qualified institutions was also envisaged.

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IMO/WMO CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS AND CONFERENCES,
HELD IN VIENNA, AUSTRIA, 4-7 SEPTEMBER 1973, AND
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 10-12 SEPTEMBER 1973

The first International Meteorological Congress, held in Vienna in September 1873, led to the creation of the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which functioned without interruption until 1951 as an effective body for ensuring international collaboration in meteorology and for encouraging the development of the science of meteorology and its practical application. In 1951 the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) took over, with enlarged responsibilities and as a specialized agency of the United Nations, the functions of IMO.

The year 1973 therefore marked one hundred years of international cooperation in the field of meteorology, achieved through the work of IMO and WMO. The centenary was accordingly celebrated under the title of 'IMO/WMO Centenary.'

Celebrations of various kinds were organized at the national level in Member-countries of WMO, while at the international level special celebrations were arranged in Vienna (the birthplace of IMO) and in Geneva (the present seat of WMO). The decision to hold such celebrations was formally taken by the WMO Congress, the highest body of the Organization representing the Member Governments. The Governments of Austria and Switzerland, which were invited to participate in the organization of the celebrations in Vienna and Geneva, respectively, responded readily to the invitation and a programme at each of these places was drawn up on a joint basis with the respective governments.

The Vienna part of the celebrations took place from 4 to 7 September 1973. This was followed by the celebrations in Geneva from 10 to 12 September 1973. Representatives of 73 Member countries of WMO and of 17 international organizations were present in Vienna, while in Geneva 75 Member countries and 19 international organizations were represented. The programme at each place consisted of a formal ceremony and a scientific conference. All of these events were presided over by Mr M. F. Taha (Egypt), President of WMO. Dr D. A. Davies, Secretary-General of WMO, was also present and addressed the meetings.

The formal centenary ceremony in Vienna was held in the Academy of Sciences, in the same hall in which the first International Meteorological Congress had been held one hundred years earlier. The Federal President of Austria, H. E. Mr Franz Jonas, and the Austrian Federal Minister for Science and Research, H. E. Mrs Hertha Firnberg, addressed the gathering. The ceremony in Geneva, held in the newly-constructed International Conference Centre, was held in the presence of Mr H. P. Tschudi, Conseiller fédéral, and representatives of the Canton and of the City of Geneva. Mr Tschudi addressed the gathering on behalf of the Swiss authorities.

The purpose of the scientific Conference in Vienna, which was held in the excellent conference room of the International Atomic Energy Agency, was to review the science of meteorology during the past 100 years, and in particular to highlight the important scientific developments and achievements in the subject—including the introduction of modern techniques and the trends of future development. Six lectures were delivered on the following subjects: (1) General review of the science of meteorology during the last 100 years, including the role played by IMO/WMO; (2) Weather forecasting—its past and future; (3) Developments and trends in climatological research; (4) Review of scientific aims of the Global Atmospheric Research Programme (GARP), with particular reference to the role of the Oceans; (5) Developments in the techniques of observing the atmosphere; and (6) Developments in weather modification.

The purpose of the Conference in Geneva was to emphasize the economic and social benefits of meteorology, with particular reference to developing countries. The Conference was of special interest to participants from developing countries as well as to persons from governmental administrations, industries, and users of meteorology. There were six lectures on the following subjects: (1) Formulation of governmental scientific policy; (2) World Weather Watch, its impact on economic and social development; (3) WMO assists developing countries; (4) Role of meteorological services in economic and social development; (5) Interface of meteorology and hydrology in the service of water development; and (6) The role of meteorology in the use of the oceans.

The texts of the lectures will be published by WMO in their four official languages, the English version being expected to be available already early in 1974.

These conferences demonstrated with striking clarity the progress which has been made in the science and practice of meteorology over the period of one hundred years which has elapsed since the Vienna Congress of 1873. They also showed that meteorology is basically an international science and that it therefore depends on international collaboration. A major factor in ensuring such collaboration and hence in achieving the undoubted progress has been activities of the IMO and WMO.

While the ceremonies and conferences naturally looked back over the past century, some thought was given to the